



Neighborhood Character

Perpetuate the role and dynamic quality of the neighborhood

- Develop specific design guidelines for all of South Lake Union and each defined subarea of South Lake Union
- Land use and character preservation of South Lake Union

South Lake Union Neighborhood Plan

Planning Process

The South Lake Union Neighborhood Character Subcommittee was formed from the South Lake Union Planning Organization and developed a historic and design interest in South Lake Union. Issue statements for neighborhood character were developed as follows:

- **Special Historic Consideration** – An interest exists in the historical past of the neighborhood, and includes the possibility of endorsing pursuit of a special historic character designation for the Westlake District following further study of implications and understanding of control over the process and continuing rights of the property owners.
- **Neighborhood Character** – A high level of support for preserving the basic character of the district has been acknowledged. There is a strong desire to keep the area friendly for small business and light industry, but a degree of diversity also should be achieved.
- **Neighborhood Districts** – The South Lake Union Planning Organization supports the character of current land uses through the development of sub-planning areas. Subareas identified in South Lake Union are Cascade, which supports a mix of commercial, housing and social services; Westlake which represents the historic commercial core, and the Waterfront, encompassing South Lake Union Park and all existing water dependent activities around South Lake Union Major traffic corridors that will play a significant role in future development of South Lake Union and adjoining neighborhoods are Denny Way and Aurora Avenue. Both of these corridors have development potential that will dramatically alter their present character.
- **Social Services** – Recognition has been expressed that South Lake Union has a responsibility to accommodate its share of social service activities. Current data indicates that this share has been achieved, and that no additional City-funding for new

social service facilities should be used in this neighborhood without extensive neighborhood input

- **Housing** – The South Lake Union area has sufficient capacity to accommodate housing goals set forth in the Comprehensive Plan and will continue to have a residential component. Further residential growth needs to balance with a desire to maintain a mix of non-residential uses. A diversity of housing types is desired and must include the provision of affordability.
- **Zoning Refinement** – While it is understood that basic zoning in the South Lake Union Planning Area is not an issue in Phase II planning, there is a need to review existing zoning for any aspect of the code (e.g. parking requirements, affordability, setbacks, height limits, etc.) that may need refinement to reflect planning goals.

Discussion of: Key or Integrated Planned Activities for Neighborhood Character.

The ideas/recommendations found in this section reflect the outcome of the neighborhood character planning process. Development of key activities reflects recommendations that are proposed to occur immediately following acceptance of the South Lake Union Neighborhood Plan as further described in the Approval and Adoption Matrix appended hereto for reference.

Design Guidelines

South Lake Union neighborhood plays an important role in the richness of the City of Seattle. Land uses in this planning area are a functional mix of commercial and light industrial with small areas of residential. Implementing Design Guidelines for neighborhood character allows South Lake Union to set the tone for preserving the existing diverse uses. General guidelines developed for all of South Lake Union should complement and promote the existing diversity of the neighborhood. It is important for South Lake Union to have a dense, compact feel that is sensitive and complementary to the existing

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use and scale of buildings. Therefore, design guidelines should provide incentives for in-6.11 development consistent with parking needs for the area. Guidelines need to also address the prospect of housing next to light-industrial/commercial through careful siting, building material usage, scale and the provision of buffers.

Neighborhood Districts

The South Lake Union Subcommittee for Neighborhood Character acknowledges that there are distinct areas within South Lake Union planning area that require special considerations when addressing the issue of character. The subcommittee recognizes five planning areas (see Planning Area Boundaries map, Figure 3, on the next page). Refinement and adoption of subarea boundaries must occur as design guidelines are developed. The South Lake Union Subcommittee of Neighborhood Character makes the following recommendations for each subarea:

A) **Waterfront District**-This area adjacent to Lake Union, including the new park and extending into the neighborhood shall develop a set of design recommendations supporting an "industrial maritime" theme for use in public developments and encouraged for private developments. Historical maritime elements such as boats, fittings, charts, maritime industrial equipment, maritime industrial shed buildings (1900-1930) with their use of metal siding and brick warehouses with their heavy timber framework provide the basis for an "industrial maritime" theme, and should be encouraged of private development in this zone. Design of public right-of-way will also be subject to these standards..

Public access, pedestrian friendly access to Lake Union and preservation of existing view corridors to the water are issues that have helped define the need for design guidelines. Design guidelines are to incorporate thematic lighting, pedestrian crossing paving, and street furniture, as well as pedestrian oriented landscaping. Consideration should also be given to how new cul-

tural facilities could be included to complement the character and uses in the Waterfront District

B) **Westlake District**-Consider establishment of a conservation district in this area intended to preserve its commercial/industrial character represented by the existing 3-4 story buildings of brick and concrete with open bay floors, window detail, etc.. Establishing a conservation district is a necessary step in allowing for the provision of incentives that would insure preservation of the existing commercial/industrial character. Transfer of development rights could be obtained for buildings and would relieve properties of development pressure and rising tax assessments and preserve current commercial uses. Management of the conservation district would be proposed as a neighborhood representative board with the following incentives and restrictions

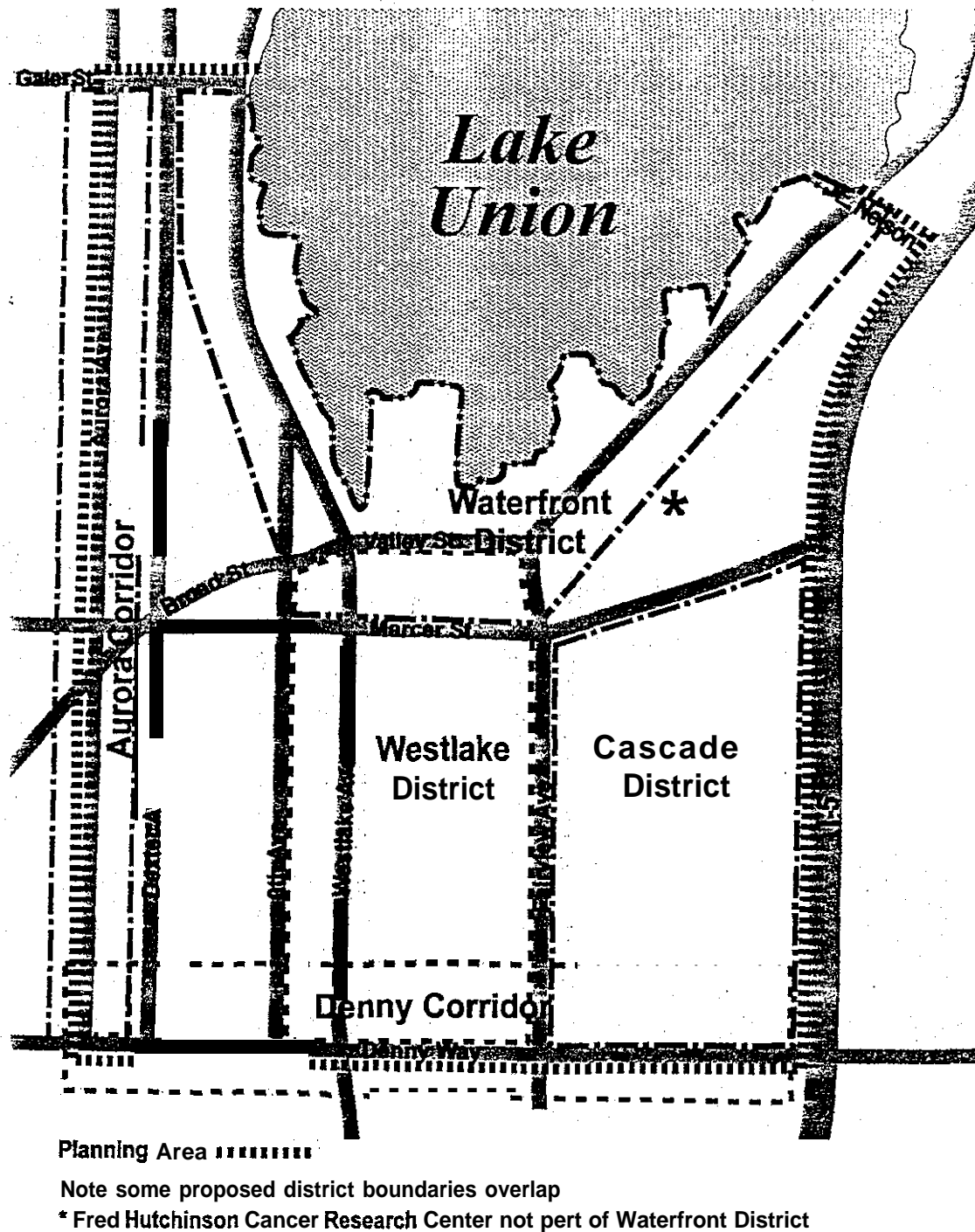
Incentives

- 1) Transfer of development rights (TDR) for older buildings to allow their preservation
- 2) Building code relief for energy, parking & land use
- 3) Grants for seismic and ADA code mandated building upgrades
- 4) Property tax-freeze on improvements for ten years (special valuation)
- 5) Property tax reduction on land value assessment
- 6) Small lot incentives for vacant lots in subarea
- 7) Below market rate building rehabilitation loans

Restrictions

- 1) Review of construction projects (new and additions/renovations) in the subarea by the neighborhood representative board
- 2) Demolition ordinance requiring a new project proposal for a site slated for demolition of an existing historically significant structure.
- 3) Propose design guidelines for new development in this subarea considering such elements as setbacks, window styles, building materials, street trees or other vertical amenities, signage, etc.

South Lake Union Neighborhood Plan



South Lake Union Planning Area Boundaries

Figure 3

South Lake Union Neighborhood Plan

Review Board Structure

A board could be composed of neighborhood property owners and residents as an oversight committee for the conservation district. Organizational structure of the board is yet to be determined.

C.) Cascade District-Recommendations for the Cascade subarea include reinstatement of parking requirements for new residential development, review and possible revision of overall district parking requirements and an evaluation of housing studying the balance of housing by income category. Guidelines encouraging market rate housing and participation in the development of a citywide process for siting of social services is proposed. Also recommended for the Cascade subarea is the review and modification of the industrial zoning along the east side of Fairview Avenue so as to provide comfortable relationships between industrial and commercial uses and adjacent allowable industrial uses. These recommendations are intended to supplement existing goals from the Cascade Neighborhood council.

D) Denny Corridor-Currently the block adjacent to Denny Way has the highest height limits in the South Lake Union Planning Area. Given the traffic volume along Denny Way, it has been targeted as a receiving district for TDR's from the Westlake subarea. Working with the Denny Triangle planning committee it may be possible to set up Denny Triangle (south side of Denny Way) as a possible TDR receiving area.

E) Aurora Corridor-This is another area that could receive TDR's from the conservation district in the Westlake subarea. This area serves as a buffer to the South Lake Union planning area and could handle greater commercial and residential density as it abuts a major transportation artery (Aurora Avenue North).

Character Defining Tools

In addition to the development of design guidelines, recommendations have emerged that address character preservation and underscore the role of the neighborhood. Taken as a package, these recommendations form a second key activity for the

neighborhood. Zoning refinements, and/or modifications, for all of South Lake Union that relate to and promote the character for new light-industrial/commercial development and housing include:

- A) Adjustment of the mixed-use balance between commercial and housing uses in the C1 and C2 zones in South Lake Union with the recommendation that a minimum floor-area-ratio (FAR) of 1.5 floors of commercial be established in these two zones. FAR requirements would be graduated upward and respond to increased height limits of underlying zoning.
- B) Suspension of any further City funded social service facilities in the neighborhood until citywide siting process is in place and neighborhood review process defined.
- C) Remove Design Review process from purview over land use waivers.
- D) Review I C zoning to see how cultural uses could be allowed and made compatible with traditional uses.

Other Considerations for Neighborhood Character

In the near term, it is proposed that new housing projects of 20 units or more require 5% of the units be affordable housing at 80% of Seattle's median income level.

Longer-term considerations include preparation and adoption of corridor plans for Denny Way and Aurora Avenue North. The plans are proposed to recognize the importance of these corridors as gateways and recipients of intense future development. Another longer-term consideration is the establishment of concurrency requirements for housing units constructed in excess of the 1,700 target housing units specified under the City Comprehensive Plan. Concurrency requirements may include contribution to parks and open space, transportation (especially transit) and community facilities. In addition to concurrency requirements, consideration should be given to additional increases (beyond those in the basic recommendation) in base level commercial FAR for projects in the C1 and C2 zones.